

# Veterans benefit from training agreement

By Samantha L. Quigley  
American Forces Press Service

Veterans Affairs Department and Walter Reed Army Medical Center leaders took a step June 6 toward helping severely injured servicemembers transition to civilian jobs.

VA Secretary R. James Nicholson and Walter Reed commander, Army Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Farmer Jr., signed a memorandum of understanding at the Army medical center for the VA to offer vocational training and temporary jobs at its Washington headquarters.

"What we're doing I think is making good on President Lincoln's promise to care for them who have borne the battle and for their widow and for their orphan," Nicholson said. "It's only natural then, it seems to me, that the VA and Walter Reed should ink a partnership like VET IT, which taps into this inexhaustible supply of our young servicemembers' optimism and 'can-doism' that they're imbued with."

This agreement, Farmer said, establishes a partnership between VA's office of information technology and Walter Reed's education services division.

Servicemembers recovering at WRAMC from traumatic injuries will receive the training and jobs. Farmer said more than 800 veterans on medical hold at the center could benefit from this program.

"From the outset, we have taken the



*Veterans Affairs Secretary R. James Nicholson, left, and Army Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Farmer Jr., Walter Reed Army Medical Center commander, sign a memorandum of understanding at Walter Reed on June 6. The agreement gives severely wounded servicemembers such as, from left, Matthew Braiotta, Eric Franklin and Tristan Wyatt, the opportunity to receive training through the VA while they are recuperating.*

approach that there is much more to care and caring of these Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines than the extraordinary clinical care (at WRAMC)," Farmer said. "As amazing and cutting edge as that care is and as far as that care goes in restoring their health and their physical functions, there is more to restoring lives."

The VET IT program already has 35 alumni, 15 of which currently have full-time jobs with the VA.

"Our aim was to assist these young disabled servicemembers with training

with the hopes of moving them into new careers in the Department of Veterans Affairs to take the reins as we begin to retire," Jennifer Duncan, a management director in VA's office of information technology said.

VET IT has worked so well that there are plans to expand it. Run by volunteers, the program has been so successful because it is personalized for each veteran.

Matthew Braiotta, a pioneer in the VET IT program and a recent VA hire, is grateful for the opportunities. He was an Army scout with the 3rd

Armored Cavalry Regiment and had planned to make the Army a career, when he was hit with an roadside bomb in Iraq. Braiotta said that the program has kept him from ending up, as he put it, dogging it out in college or in a dead-end job.

"I didn't know what was going on in my life," he said. "[Without VET IT] I'd probably be at home not getting very far very fast, and that's not the Army way."

For more information visit the VA Web site at <http://www.va.gov/>.

## How to get the NCO Journal

Individual subscriptions to the *NCO Journal* are available through the Government Printing Office at the annual cost of \$16 for domestic and Army Post Office (APO) addresses or \$22.40 for delivery to foreign addresses. The subscription price covers four issues annually. The subscription program is open to all individuals and non-government organizations. Individual copies are available for \$5 domestic or \$7 foreign.

To order online, visit the GPO Bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

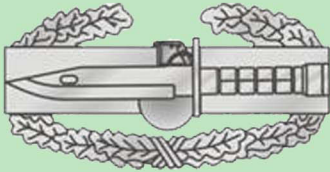
and type in "*NCO Journal*" at the search field. After the search completes, click on the shopping cart next to the title and follow the instructions provided.

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Any unit with a publications account can update their 12 series to request the *NCO Journal* using the same procedure they use to request all other publications. They can update their 12 series at the <http://www.usapa.army.mil> Web site. The IDN for the *NCO Journal* is 050041.



## Combat Action Badge design approved



The Army announced May 27 the design for the Combat Action Badge (CAB). The design was approved by Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff.

The CAB, featuring both a bayonet and grenade, may be awarded to any Soldier performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement. The award is not limited by one's branch or military occupational specialty.

The CAB will go into immediate production and should be available late this summer or early fall through unit supply and military clothing sales stores.

For more information, contact Maj. Elizabeth Robbins, Army Public Affairs, at (703) 697-5343, [elizabeth.robbs@hqda.army.mil](mailto:elizabeth.robbs@hqda.army.mil) or Lt. Col. Pamela Hart, at (703) 693-5662, [pamela.hart@hqda.army.mil](mailto:pamela.hart@hqda.army.mil).

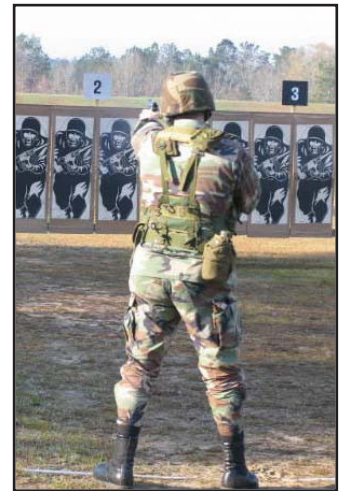
## Drill sergeants can compete for trophy at next All-Army

Lt. Col. David J. Liwanag, the commander of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, announced that there will be a new trophy awarded at the 2006 All-Army Small Arms Championships to be conducted in March.

The High Drill Sergeant Trophy will be awarded to the top-scoring drill sergeant (active or Reserve component noncommissioned officer on drill sergeant status) at the All-Army Championships, on the condition that at least 12 drill sergeants compete.

The trophy will be awarded to the drill sergeant with the highest cumulative aggregate total of individual M-16 rifle and M-9 pistol scores fired in the All-Army matches. M-16s are fired at distances from 25 to 500 yards and the M-9 pistol is shot from 10 to 25 yards. Shooters fire all matches wearing helmet and load-bearing equipment or vest.

For more information on the All-Army Small Arms Championships visit the USAMU Web site at [www.usamu.com](http://www.usamu.com).



## Army enlistment process now online

Young men and women interested in joining the Army can now begin the application process without setting foot in a recruiting station.

The U.S. Army Recruiting Command implemented the Army Career Explorer, an online tool that allows applicants who are hesitant about visiting a recruiter in person to begin the process of becoming a Soldier from their homes.

Army Career Explorer is the logical next step in Army Recruiting's use of the Internet. Army Recruiting Command

originally developed [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) as an information Web site, and over the years has expanded its informational offerings to include video segments and live online chat with cyber recruiters. Army Career Explorer takes the next step, allowing a prospect to not only gather information, but also to begin the actual process of enlisting.



The Army Career Explorer helps applicants become more familiar with the Army and the jobs for which they may qualify. They can watch job videos and also ask questions about the Army and the enlistment process. Applicants create an account to access the tool on the Army's [goarmy.com](http://goarmy.com) Web site.

In Army Career Explorer, applicants begin filling out their enlistment paperwork. They can take as much time as necessary and will be able to enter and exit the program as often as desired before submitting information.

If an applicant is having problems completing the information at any time during the process, he or she can call their local recruiter to get help.

To find out more about the Army Career Explorer or to create an account, go to [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) and click on "Overview."

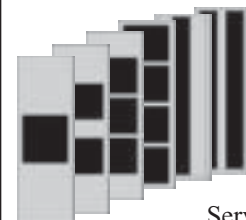
## Warrant officers needed

The United States Army is looking for highly motivated Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen to fill its warrant officer ranks. Positions are open in all 41 active duty warrant officer



specialties, and the following are experiencing critical shortages: Military Intelligence, Special Forces, Food

Service, Criminal Investigation, and Airdrop Systems Technicians. Applicants with less than 12 years active federal service (AFS) are encouraged to apply. For more information visit: [www.usarec.army.mil/warrant](http://www.usarec.army.mil/warrant).





## 'Statues of Servicemen' immortalizes fallen troops

By Steven Donald Smith  
American Forces Press Service

A nationwide project is under way to pay lasting tribute to fallen servicemembers in their hometowns.

The "Statues of Servicemen" campaign is an effort to immortalize every American servicemember killed in the war on terrorism by creating a bronze statue of their likeness.

The statues will be placed in the hometowns of the fallen servicemembers.

"These statues will be placed in city and town halls and government buildings throughout the United States to memorialize the brave men and women who have given their lives in the war on terror," said Sam Patterson, national SOS project director.

The organization began in March 2004 as "Survivors of Servicemen," with the goal of bringing attention to the trauma inflicted on the families of those killed, and to highlight the financial distress faced by many military families.

The group began selling "Wear



*The first bust in the "Statues of Servicemen" campaign, that of Marine Pfc. Daniel McClenney, was unveiled in Shelbyville, Tenn., on April 22.*

Camo" wristbands to raise money for families who lost loved ones. The wristbands were so successful that they decided to use the proceeds to fund the statue campaign, Patterson said.

The first statue was unveiled in

Shelbyville, Tenn., on April 22 with the bust of Marine Corps Pfc. Daniel McClenney. He was killed on June 24, 2004, when his unit was ambushed while patrolling Afghanistan's mountainous Konar province.

The ceremony took place at the Shelbyville Court House, where the Nashville Marine Corps Reserve unit provided a 21-gun salute, and McClenney was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

The second statue, depicting Marine Capt. Brent Morel, was unveiled in Memphis, Tenn., on May 21.

Morel was killed in Iraq on April 7, 2004, when insurgents ambushed his platoon while they escorted a convoy in the Anbar province. He was awarded the Navy Cross and is nominated for the Medal of Honor.

SOS is working with parents and spouses around the country to memorialize more troops.

For more information on Statues of Servicemen visit the SOS Web site at <http://www.sosfund.us/>.

## Soldiers graduate from first MOS course offered in a combat zone since World War II

By Maj. Eric Bloom

Soldiers from the 76th Infantry Brigade, Indiana National Guard, assigned to Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan, were honored May 28 during a graduation ceremony held for an infantry military occupation skill qualification course.

It is only the second time in history an infantry MOSQ course has been held in a combat zone, the first being in World War II. Task Force Phoenix spearheaded the qualification course during its



Photo by Maj. Eric Bloom

*Sgt. Joe McFarren receives a knife from Brig. Gen. Richard Moorhead, commander of Task Force Phoenix, during the Infantry MOS qualification course graduation ceremony at Camp Phoenix, May 28.*

deployment to train the Afghan National Army.

Sgt. Joe McFarren, of Headquarters Company, 76th Infantry Brigade, was named the course's Honor Graduate and Spc. Matt Estheiner received the Commandant's Award for academic success during the course.

The two-week course was conducted at Camp Phoenix near Kabul and at the Afghan National Army's Kabul Military Training Center. The course was offered to Soldiers who already held a primary MOS. These Soldiers are now qualified for 11B (Infantry) as a secondary MOS.

While 46 Soldiers began the course, only 35 graduated after two demanding weeks of honing their infantry skills.

The Soldiers also performed squad live-fire and military operations in urban terrain training, adding more realism to their training.

Anytime the Soldiers were in the field, they were aware that a real enemy threat was nearby and live land mines were in the area.

The qualified 11B instructors assured that training and doctrine standards were maintained throughout the course.

The main difference about this course is that the stress factor was real; the instructors conducted the course among real Afghan locals and within an actual combat zone.

# Army awards MPs for turning table on ambush

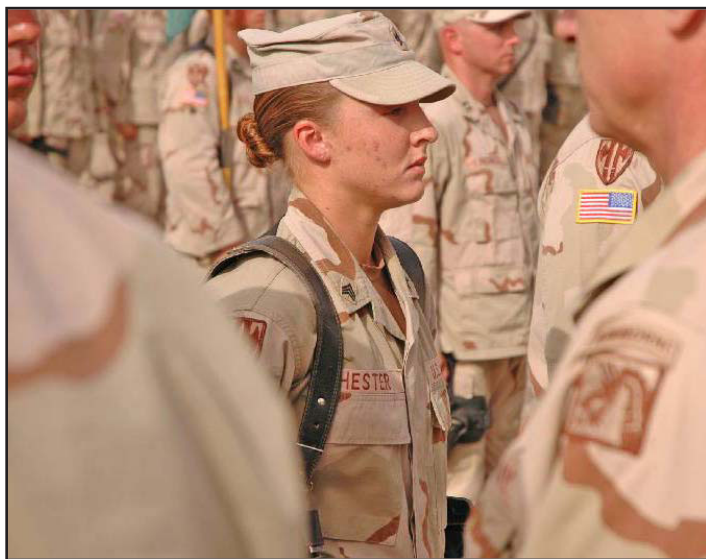


Photo by Spc. Jeremy D. Crisp

**Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, vehicle commander, 617th Military Police Company, Richmond, Ky., stands at the position of attention before receiving the Silver Star at an awards ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq, June 16. Hester is the first female Soldier serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom to receive the Silver Star.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq (Army News Service, June 16, 2005) – The first female Soldier since World War II was awarded a Silver Star in Iraq June 16, and seven other members of her National Guard military police company received citations for valor after helping turn the tide of a convoy ambush earlier this spring.

Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester received the Silver Star, the Army's third highest award for valor, in a morning ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein and Spc. Jason Mike also received Silver Stars at the ceremony.

Three other members of the same squad received a Bronze Star with valor device: Spc. Casey Cooper, Spc. William Haynes II, and Spc. Ashley Pullen. Sgt. Dustin Morris and Spc. Jesse Ordunez received an Army Commendation Medal with valor device. All are members of the Kentucky National Guard's 617th Military Police Company.

The Soldiers thwarted an insurgent attack against a coalition convoy March 20. The convoy of 26 supply vehicles was ambushed by about 40 insurgents southeast of Baghdad.

The 45-minute firefight left 27 insurgents dead, six wounded, and one captured. Three of the 617th Soldiers were wounded.

The MPs also confiscated a sizable weapons cache, including 22 AK-47 machine guns, 13 RPK rifles, six rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 16 RPG rockets, and about 40 hand grenades.

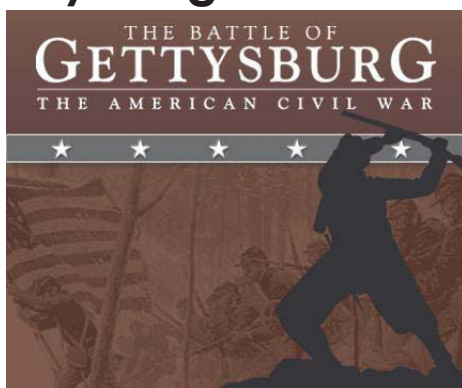
## Army marks Gettysburg anniversary with Web site

In an effort to link its past to the present, the Army launched a new historical Web site, the Battle of Gettysburg, in time for Independence Day. The Battle of Gettysburg, which took place 142 years ago July 1-3, was one of America's bloodiest battles. It defined the United States as a nation and the character of its people, said Chuck Jenks, program manager and senior communications strategist.

"We use historical content to articulate Army values and traditions to the global audience," he said. "Soldiers of yesterday are exactly like Soldiers today – they share Army values, a warrior ethos and call to duty. Soldiers understand what it means to be called Soldier and it's no different today than it was in 1863."

One of the goals of the new site is to communicate how Americans during the Civil War era also heeded the call to duty. It's another vehicle that tells the Army's story and reflects the timeless values of Soldiers, Jenks said.

The Battle of Gettysburg Web site, located on the Army's homepage,



[www.army.mil/gettysburg](http://www.army.mil/gettysburg), offers users a savvy perspective of the Civil War featuring pop-up icons, narration sound bytes, an animated battlescape, historical

video footage, information on weaponry and statistics, an epilogue and profiles of men and women who served during the war. Web designers opted for a different approach, but still remained true to the historical aspects of the Civil War.

To make the site unique, the animated battlescape allows users to launch the battle, which broke out July 1 at 6 a.m. Historical footage also shows former president Franklin D. Roosevelt at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.

That all Americans share a call to duty is threaded into the theme of the Gettysburg Web site.

### Correction

In our April 2005 issue of the NCO Journal we mistakenly printed the wrong home state for one of the Honor Roll Soldiers. The description for 1st Lt. Jason Timmerman should have read that he hails from Tracy, Minnesota, and not Michigan as stated. We thank everyone who brought this to our attention.

Also in the April issue, on Page 31, Letters to the Editor, "An affirmative philosophy," under the second paragraph the sentence "My Sergeant doesn't follow the rule, and he is not loyal... why should I?" The word "It" should be replaced with "I."